

Marine Harriers bring death from above

Story and photo by Sgt. Greg Heath
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – For the past year, Marine Attack Wing (VMA) 513, has been providing close-air support for coalition ground forces throughout Afghanistan.

On call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the Marine pilots and mechanics on Bagram are responsible for keeping their AV-8 Harrier jets ready to fly anywhere at a moments notice.

The Marine Corps is the only U.S. military service that flies the Harrier, which differs from other fighter jets in that it can make vertical take-offs and landings, simi-

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Photo by Sgt. Stephanie Hall

Time for a celebration...

Lt. Col. Luis B. Crespo, left, commander of the 10th Soldier Support Battalion, and Pfc. Lisseyda Y. Rosario, 10th SSB, officially kick off the Hispanic Heritage Month at Bagram Air Base with a cake cutting ceremony held Monday. Activities like weekly movies featuring Hispanic actors at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation center and a Latin dance and cookout will be featured throughout this month.

Bamian CA Team delivers to future of Afghanistan

Story by Sgt. Stephanie Hall
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAMIAN, Afghanistan – The rugged terrain of Bamian Province's mountain passes and valleys doesn't hamper the Bamian Provincial Reconstruction Team Civil Affairs Teams' determination to reach their destinations.

Whether it is by a 4/4-vehicle convoy or astride a horse, these soldiers set out weekly on single and multiple-day missions armed with tools to help chisel out a promising future for Afghanistan's up and coming gen-

eration.

On one particular mission the first part of this month, the team set out on a multiple-vehicle, multiple-day mission to a couple of schools in the Panjab District of the Bamian Province.

The 19-person team traveled roughly 200 Kilometers southwest of the Bamian PRT to supply a couple of schools with "blue packs", radios, water jugs, first aid kits and coalition newspapers, said Maj. Randy D. Castillo, Civil Joint Military Operations Task Force.

"A blue pack is actually a shoulder bag a child can carry to school and has all his pens

and paper and books in it," said Castillo. "It actually comes preloaded with some reading material, pens, paper, (and) blank tablets."

These contributions are "a shared gift," said Castillo.

For example, it's not gift from the CAT A or a gift from the Bamian PRT. The "gifts" are presented to the schools by the CA Team through the hands of the Afghan government "so our efforts are working hand in hand to show the people of the schools that both governments are working together; both governments have an interest in the education of

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



U.S. soldiers question a suspected Saddam loyalist in Tikrit Monday.

Suspected resistance organizers arrested in Iraq Monday

TIKRIT, Iraq — U.S. troops in Tikrit on Monday arrested seven people suspected of helping bankroll resistance to coalition forces, as a U.S. soldier in Baghdad died of wounds from an attack on his vehicle, the U.S. military said.

“We think these guys are behind a lot of organizing and financing of the activities here in Tikrit,” said Maj. Troy Smith said of the suspects arrested near Saddam Hussein’s hometown. “They’re certainly instigators.”

Three of the raids were in Tikrit and the fourth was in Aujaja, near Tikrit, Smith said.

In Baghdad, a U.S. soldier died from wounds suffered when his vehicle was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade while on patrol early Monday, the U.S. military said.

The soldier, assigned to the U.S. Army’s 1st Armored Division, was wounded in the attack and died later at a combat-support hospital, the Army said.

With Monday’s attack, 295 U.S. troops have died since the Iraq war began in March — 189 from hostile fire. Of those, 156 have died since May 1, when President Bush declared an end to major combat operations — 74 from hostile fire.

There is no reliable source for Iraqi civilian or combatant casualty figures, either during the period of major combat or after May 1. *The Associated Press* reported an estimated 3,240 civilian Iraqi deaths between March 20 and April 20, but the *AP* said that the figure was based on records of only half of Iraq’s hospitals and the actual number was thought to be significantly higher.



More than 100 people were working in the building at the time of the blast.

Bomb kills 2, wounds 29 in Russia Monday

MOSCOW — A suicide bomber detonated a truck loaded with nearly a ton of explosives at a key Russian government building in the southern Russian region of Ingushetia, killing at least two people in addition to himself and wounding 29, a Russian prosecutor on the scene said.

Russian authorities blamed Chechen terrorists for Monday’s suicide operation at the building housing the Russian Federal Security Service, known by its Russian initials FSB, in the Ingush capital of Magas.

No one has claimed responsibility the bombing, which occurred west of Chechnya.

Chechens wanting an independent Islamic republic have carried out numerous attacks against the Russian government and civilians. Authorities say the Chechen terrorist groups are linked to al Qaeda.

Authorities said the driver of the truck crashed through a series of barricades outside the building just before noon (5 a.m. ET), arriving within about 15 meters (yards) of the building before setting off the blast.

The country has been on high alert amid fears rebels would try to disrupt elections for a Chechen president scheduled for October 5.

Russian officials have called their efforts to stop the terrorist activities part of the international war on terrorism, and have ruled out talks with Chechen separatists.

Less than two weeks ago, an attack on a commuter train in the region killed six people.

Last month, a similar truck bombing at a Russian military hospital killed at least 40

Russian soldiers who were being treated for wounds they had suffered in fighting Chechen separatists inside Chechnya.



Expected to cause damage to the Eastern shore the military orders ships, aircraft out of storm's path.

Isabel prompts Congress to leave Washington

(CNN) — The forecast ferocity of Hurricane Isabel prompted Congress to consider leaving Washington early, spurred the U.S. military to deploy some of its ships and aircraft, and had residents from North Carolina to Maryland monitoring the latest weather reports Monday.

“If Isabel stays close to our forecast track and if it does make landfall as a major hurricane, it has the potential for large loss of life if we don’t take it seriously and prepare,” National Hurricane Center Director Max Mayfield told CNN.

The Hurricane Center’s three-day forecast track shows Isabel’s center striking North Carolina’s Pamlico Sound — about 45 miles north of Morehead City and 120 miles east of Raleigh — at 2 p.m. EDT Thursday, then turning north, slightly inland of Chesapeake Bay.

Isabel’s maximum sustained winds were near 125 mph (200 kph), with higher gusts, making it a solid Category 3 storm. That was slightly weaker than the system had been over the weekend, but Mayfield warned that the storm was still “very dangerous.”

“I would expect to see extensive damage to a pretty large section of the country” if the hurricane sticks to the forecast track, Mayfield told CNN. “It’s been a long time since we’ve had a hurricane on this track.”

With his state possibly in the bull’s-eye for Isabel, Virginia Gov. Mark Warner declared a state of emergency Monday.

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lar to a helicopter, along with doing a normal airstrip take-off.

The Marines, who are typically the first American military force ashore in times of war, benefit from the aircrafts' ability to land practically anywhere.

"All we have to do is push inland and secure a road or build an expeditionary airfield to land the Harrier," said Capt. Toby Moore, Harrier pilot, VMA 513. "The Harrier can land on an area only two or three feet outside the (landing tires)."

The Marines, out of Yuma Marine Corps Air Station in Arizona, arrived here September of last year and have been flying missions non-stop since then.

Armed with 1000-pound laser guided bombs and with the 25mm Gatling gun in which each high-explosive round fired is like a hand grenade when impacting the target, the Harriers are an extremely lethal asset to coalition ground forces, according to Moore.

"If we have the target in sight, whether day or night, you can pretty much guarantee we're going to put that bomb on a target," Moore said.

Along with carrying a lethal arsenal, the Harriers also serve as an audible deterrent to anti-coalition forces. The shrill whine of the jet engine can scare off enemy forces, according to Moore. "We actually got a letter from some troops (at an outpost here) who said that whenever they heard us overhead they never got bothered."

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the people," said Castillo.

Those contributions are actually "not a whole lot, but to the (children) it makes a huge difference," said Spc. Matthew A. Baumgartner, 407th CA Battalion, CJMOTF.

He said that when he sees the current condition of Afghan schools he feels it's important "to give back to civilians who were so adversely affected by conflict," he said.

The mission had a second part and that was to escort the New Zealand forces down to the Panjab to give them a familiarization to the district, and to let the New Zealanders get a feel for



Marine Lance Cpl. Shawn Harper, of the VMA 513th works on a harrier in a Bagram hangar.

The Harrier unit's mission tempo in Afghanistan is vastly different from what they're used to back in their home station.

During a pretty busy year back in the states, a pilot flies between 150-200 hours, according to Moore, but out here all the pilots will exceed 350 hours.

And with the extra flight hours in Afghanistan's austere conditions, it has produced a lot of long days and nights for the Harrier maintenance Marines.

"The Harrier is easily the most labor-intensive aircraft in the U.S. arsenal," said Cpl. Berj Merjanian, Harrier mechanic. "For every four flight hours, 100 man hours of maintenance is needed to service each aircraft."

The Marines also have to deal with

keeping the flightline clear of debris or anything that could be sucked into the Harrier's low-seated jet engine.

As a testament to the seamless hard work displayed by both the pilots and mechanics, the VMA 513 has performed more flight hours in a year in Afghanistan than all of the Harriers in the Marine Corps this year combined, according to Merjanian.

Merjanian said even though they have been working practically non-stop for an entire year, they're proud of their part in the mission.

"Every time one of these jets takes off from the runway we know we contributed to the cause of saving lives or killing (the enemy)."

how the U.S. CA Team operates, said Castillo.

Right now the U.S. team is in the process of handing the Bamian PRT mission to a team of New Zealand forces, but the five-person U.S. CA Team will stay and continue their missions, said Castillo.

He doesn't mind being left behind because his mission provides his team the opportunity to have a hand in "rebuilding the country through (our) interaction," said Castillo.

"And I get to see the smiles on the kids faces and hear all the thank-you's, and all the appreciation that are being passed around, and they're all from the heart of the people," he said.

ANA host live-fire exercise in Pol-e-Charki

POL-E-CHARKI, Afghanistan – Recently, the Afghan National Army's (ANA) 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 3rd Brigade, Central Corps rained steel on targets during a live-fire exercise to test their BMP gunners' accuracy at Pol-e-Charki range.

For the first time ever, ANA BMP infantry fighting vehicle gunners used restored BMPs to fire 73mm rounds at targets more than 1,000 meters away.

"For their first time firing, these soldiers are doing an excellent job," said Lt. Col. Grurgai Dermendcev, commander of the Bulgarian Mobile Training Team.

The ANA gunners built a knowledge base to use the weapons effectively, which they will use toward a combined-arms-live-fire exercise (CALFEX) scheduled for 22 September here.

During the CALFEX, BMP crews will play a key role in transporting infantry squads and providing suppressive fires.

"The unit is learning to use its weapons' systems and vehicles effectively and is becoming a self-sustainable force," Dermendcev said.

ANA Sgt. 1st Class Sayend Hamid, a platoon sergeant from Heart province, seconded Dermendcev's words saying, "The more we train, the more we will be able to defend our country, and the less we will need to have the help of coalition soldiers."

In addition to the battalion's efforts to learn how to effectively maintain and employ the BMPs, the unit commander is incorporating dismounted patrolling and check-point operations into the training program.

"The training we're receiving from coalition experts and specialists is very beneficial – it helps us prepare for our mission of safeguarding our nation," said Hamid.

As evident by this live fire exercise, the ANA is enhancing its ability to deploy its forces as needed to provide for the peace and security of Afghanistan.

(Information from CJTF-180 Press Release)

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: "Switch Back." FBI agent Dennis Quaid tries to catch a serial killer who kidnapped his son.



Tomorrow's movie will be "About A Boy."

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Wednesday
Bagram:	Mostly clear H: 90F L: 57F	Mostly clear H: 91F L: 55F
Kandahar:	Dusty H: 100F L: 64F	Dusty H: 97F L: 64F
Kabul:	Haze H: 90F L: 57F	Partly cloudy H: 91F L: 55F
Uzbekistan:	Clear H: 87F L: 52F	Clear H: 89F L: 57F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)

David slays Goliath: Dallas beats Giants in overtime 35-32 Monday



Troy Hambrick finished with 60 yards on 23 carries Monday as Dallas won 35-32 in overtime.

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. – This could have been one of Bill Parcells' worst losses. Billy Cundiff turned into one of his biggest wins.

Cundiff, who tied the game at the end of regulation with a 52-yard field goal, tied an NFL record with the game-winner from 25 yards with 5:57 left in overtime to give the

Dallas Cowboys a 35-32 victory over the New York Giants.

It was Parcells' first win as Dallas' coach and it came over the team he led to two Super Bowl victories.

The last field goal was Cundiff's seventh of the game to tie the record held by three others and it came after an eight-play, 51-yard drive led by Quincy Carter.

The Giants rallied from a 29-14 fourth-quarter deficit and seemed to have the game won when Matt Bryant kicked a 30-yard field goal with 11 seconds left to give them a 32-29 lead.

But Bryant's ensuing squib kickoff went out of bounds at the 1, giving Dallas the ball at its own 40. Carter then hit Antonio Bryant with a 25-yard pass to the New York 34. Cundiff sent it to overtime with his career-long field goal.

Carter, who finished 24-of-39 for 298 yards, led the Cowboys 51 yards on the winning drive. The key play was a 23-yard pass to former Giant Dan Campbell, who made his first catch for Dallas after signing in the offseason.

For most of the final quarter, it looked like Parcells' Cowboys (1-1) would go down valiantly.

The Jersey guy coaching the Texas team watched helplessly as Kerry Collins rallied the Giants from a 15-point fourth-quarter deficit to a 32-29 lead before Bryant's kick gave the Cowboys just enough field position for the tying kick.

Collins threw second-half TD passes of 5 yards to Ike Hilliard, 1 yard to Jeremy Shockey and 20 to Amani Toomer to lead New York's comeback, but Dallas showed poise in overtime and pulled out a victory.

Parcells is 50-0 in his career when his team carries a lead of 12 points or more into the final quarter.

Clarett abandons college, eyes the NFL

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. – Suspended Ohio State running back Maurice Clarett has asked the NFL to change its rules and make him eligible for the 2004 NFL Draft.

Commissioner Paul Tagliabue said Sunday that the league received a request last week from Clarett's lawyer, Alan C. Milstein.



Clarett will challenge the NFL ruling that a player isn't eligible for the draft until his third year out of high school.

Tagliabue told The Associated Press that a lawyer from his office would meet with a lawyer for Clarett to discuss the case, probably the week after next.

Last week, Clarett was suspended by Ohio State for at least one season for violating NCAA bylaws concerning benefits for athletes and for lying to investigators. Also, Ohio State is investigating charges that athletes received improper help in classes.

Clarett, who rushed for 1,237 yards and 18 touchdowns last season as

Ohio State won the national championship, is in his second year at the school. Under NFL rules, he would not be eligible for the draft until his third year out of high school, which would be 2005.

Tagliabue said the NFL remains opposed to changing that rule, which was put into effect in 1990 with the agreement of the NFL Players' Association.

"I think it would be better if he stayed in school," the commissioner said.

Bucs' Jurevicius sidelined 4-to-6 weeks

TAMPA, Fla. – Tampa Bay Buccaneers receiver Joe Jurevicius tore a ligament in his right knee during a loss to the Carolina Panthers and will be sidelined four-to-six weeks.



Joe Jurevicius

The injury to the medial collateral ligament will not require surgery.

Jurevicius was hurt in a collision with Bucs fullback Mike Alstott during Tampa Bay's 12-9 overtime loss Sunday.

Jurevicius had four receptions for 31 yards against Carolina. He had four catches and scored two touchdowns in Tampa Bay's 17-0 season-opening victory against Philadelphia.

Karl Williams replaced Jurevicius against the Panthers. The injury also could mean more playing time for Reggie Barlow.

"It's unfortunate that Joe Jurevicius and Rickey Dudley, two guys who played a significant role in our offense, are no longer with us," Gruden said. "We've got to rally around the guys we have healthy."

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

15 Taliban killed in clash with U.S.-led forces

SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan (*Reuters*) - At least 15 Taliban fighters, a senior commander among them, have been killed in southern Afghanistan in an overnight clash involving U.S.-led forces, an Afghan official says.

But a former intelligence official from the ousted hardline regime denied the death of Mullah Abdur Rahim, who has control over southern Afghanistan where the Taliban has been most active in carrying out attacks in recent months.

"Fifteen Taliban were killed, including Mullah Abdur Rahim, in Maruf district," said Afghan Foreign Ministry official Khalid Khan Achakzai, speaking on Monday in the town of Spin Boldak not far from the Pakistan frontier.

He said the fighters killed in the clash had probably come from Zabul, which borders the province of Kandahar where Maruf is located.

The Dai Chopan district of Zabul was the scene of often intense clashes between U.S.-led forces and their Afghan allies and hundreds of Taliban guerrillas.

More than one hundred Taliban fighters and several Afghan soldiers died in the fighting.

"They were trying to regroup and launch fresh attacks," Achakzai told *Reuters*.

Mullah Abdul Samad, an intelligence officer in the radical Taliban regime, denied the death of Rahim.

"There have been deaths on both sides but it is wrong that Abdur Rahim has been killed. It is mere propaganda," Samad told *Reuters*.

It was not immediately clear whether U.S.-led forces involved in the fighting were operating alongside Afghan troops, which is often the case.

Rahim has been suffering from wounds sustained earlier in the year in a clash with Afghan forces in Spin Boldak, and a deputy was appointed to assist him by the elusive fugitive Taliban leader Mullah Omar.

There are around 12,500 troops in the U.S.-led force hunting remnants of the Taliban and al Qaeda.

Afghanistan has been rocked by the worst violence since the fall of the Taliban, in which more than 200 people have been killed, including Taliban guerrillas, government soldiers and police, civilians and aid workers.

Holiday greetings taping scheduled at Bagram

The Army and Air Force Hometown News service will be at Bagram Air Base taping holiday greetings this week. The greetings are open to all U.S. service members.

The taping will begin Sept. 15. Dates and times are subject to change.

Sept. 15 at the Post/Base Exchange 1230-2030 L.

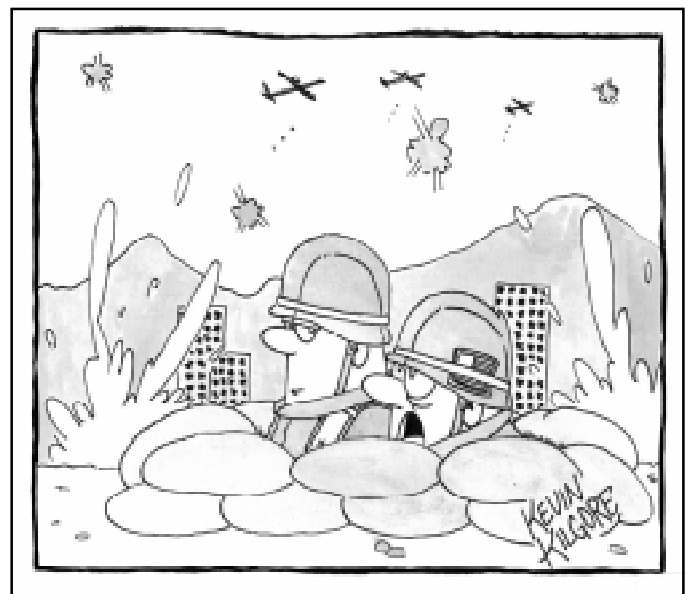
Sept. 16 at the Air Force Compound 0830-1330L and Viper DFAC 1630-2030L.

Sept. 17 at the Dragon DFAC 0730-1130 L. Viper DFAC 1230-1630 L.

All service members are encouraged to show up and tape holiday greetings for family member and friends back home.

The news service personnel will be available to answer any questions and concerns.

"Welcome to Uncle Sam's Survivor series."



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support